

SUBJECT:	VOID RECHARGES REPORT
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	MICK BARBER (CHAIR – LINCOLN TENANTS' PANEL)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HSSC) on an initial piece of work the Lincoln Tenants Panel have been assisting in relation to recharges.

2. Background

- 2.1 HSSC have discussed the issue of the level of cleansing required in void properties when considering void turnaround times. HSSC members and the LTP have noted that the Housing Repairs Service are now deploying increased resources into re-inspection cleansing due the poor state some properties are handed back in at the cessation of tenancies.
- 2.2 HSSC members and the LTP have discussed how this can be addressed and have recognised the complexity of the issue. It has been recognised that one element that could help is using the recharge mechanism more effectively and as a deterrent. It has also been noted that the current recharge levels bare no relation to the actual costs of the works. As the Housing repairs service is subject to a cost recovery model this is causing heavy additional costs in the Housing Repairs Account (HRA) as these costs are repatriated to the rent payer's account.
- 2.3 The Housing department has an established recharge mechanism where tenants can be asked to pay for damage and associated cost that have been caused during a tenancy and not considered reasonable. To instigate a complete review, the LTP have initiated, with the support of the Voids team, a pilot review of the void's elements of these charges.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 To ensure the Council continues to maintain exacting standards of void cleanliness for tenants, recover the costs associated with cleaning voids, encourage tenants to leave properties in an acceptable condition and to streamline the process of preparing properties for new tenants, and reducing void turnaround times. This will drive down cost ultimately picked up by our tenants, ensure houses are let in a better condition and in a shorter time.

4. Organisational Impacts

4.1 Finance

Implementing the National Housing Federation Schedule of Repairs will enable the Council to recover additional incurred costs, a reduction in rent loss by tenants

undertaking clearance work before ending their tenancy and reducing property void time scales.

4.2 Legal Implications

None

4.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination.
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

4.4 Human Resources

None.

4.5 Land, Property and Accommodation

None.

4.6 Significant Community Impact &/or Environmental Impact

None.

4.7 Corporate Health and Safety Implications

None.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That committee consider the initial pilot briefing attached, agree to implementing a cost recovery model with a view to increasing these amounts using the National Housing Federation Schedule of Rates to enable additional cost recovery.
- 5.2 That committee consider extending this work to the full recharge mechanism in order that this can be brought in line and pricing is updated.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? One

List of Background Papers: None

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